TWO QUESTIONS OF Present Importance BRIEFLY STATED and ARGUED:

VIZ.

Whether 'tis *Reasonable* in Point of *Policy*,

AND

Whether 'tis *Consistent* with the *Safety* and Welfare of the Establish'd *Church*; to set the *Dissenters* free from all Legal Incapacity to serve the Present GOVERNMENT.

In a Letter to a MEMBER *of* PARLIAMENT.

LONDON:

Printed for JAMES KNAPTON, *at the* Crown *in* St. Paul's Church-yard. 1717.

SIR,

THO' Your known Capacity for publick Buſineſs, and Zeal for Your COUNTRIES Intereſt and the preſent GOVERNMENT, render You every Way an equal Judge of the preſent Debate: Yet I ſhould reckon it a Preſumption to interpoſe in ſo nice an Affair, if I did not apprehend it of Importance to the Publick Welfare, and were not ſupported with the Sence of an upright Intention, and impartial Regard to Truth. I ſhall therefore without any Ceremony lay before You in a narrow Compaſs what I take to be the true State of the Caſe in the brief Diſcuſſion of theſe two Queſtions: 1. Whether 'tis Reaſonable in Point of *Policy* to ſet the Diſſenters free from all *Legal Incapacity* to ſerve the preſent GOVERNMENT? 2. Whether 'tis Conſiſtent with the *Safety* and Welfare of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*?

I SHALL only obſerve by the Way; that the preſent Legal Incapacity lies in three Acts, The *Teſt*, the *Occaſional*, and the *Schiſm Bill*. The firſt requires every Man to receive the Sacrament according to the Uſage of the *Church of England* to qualifie him for any Civil Imployment; The

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Second forbids any Such once appearing in any other Aſſemblies of Religious Worſhip but thoſe of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, under the Penalty of Forty Pound, and Forfeiture of Place. The Third forbids any Diſſenter to teach any School except Reading Engliſh, and Writing. Now Sir tho' it might be of great Uſe in the preſent Debate to conſider the Character of the *Perſons* who firſt brought them in; the ſpecial *Juncture* of Things at thoſe Seaſons; the particular *Views*, and Deſigns to be ſerved by them: Whether they are capable of receiving any Recommendation from the Hands by which they were formed; or the Reaſons upon which they went were Right, or do do ſtill remain, *&c.* yet I ſhall at preſent preſume them ſufficiently known, and be content to take the Matter juſt as it lies; and to confine myſelf to theſe two Enquiries about it.

Queſt. I. WHETHER 'tis *Reaſonable* in Point of *Policy*? I ſhall proceed here upon this general Principle; That Civil Government is deſigned for the Safety and Proſperity of the governed Society; to ſecure the Publick Peace and good Order of the World, promote the Trade and Wealth of a Nation, and protect it from the Power of Foreign and Domeſtick Enemies; being invaded from *Abroad*, or diſturbed within it ſelf. Whatſoever is a proper Means to this End muſt be allowed reaſonable and fit, in Proportion to the natural Tendency, or likely Proſpect, it has of ſerving it. So that the Queſtion here will be, Whether ſuch a Freedom from Reſtraints is a fit Means to ſuch an End in the preſent Government. And we ſhall be able to Judge of this Matter by conſidering theſe Two Things; *viz.* That every Government needs the Help of all its Friends; and that the Proteſtant Diſſenters are the true Friends of the preſent Government. *Firſt*,

Firſt, THAT every Government needs the Help of *all its Friends* is an unqueſtionable Maxim of good Policy, and carries its own Evidence along with it. The wiſeſt King has long ago added the Authority of his Judgment to Univerſal Experience; *That in the Multitude of Counſellors their is Safety*; and, *In the Multitude of People is the Kings Honour*. No Government can be too ſafe; and it will always ſtand the firmer upon a wide Bottom, and be beſt ſecured, the more Hands are employed to ſupport it. This holds Good in all Circumſtances of Things, and at all Times: But there may be ſome ſpecial Circumſtances and Seaſons which will make it more Reaſonable and even Neceſſary, and add conſiderable Weight to the general Conſideration. For Example in theſe two Caſes, *viz.* Where a Government is newly ſettled; and where it has many Enemies: And if both theſe happen to concurr, it gives all the Force to this Conſideration it is well capable of receiving, and will make it appear to the utmoſt Advantage. To apply this to our own Caſe.

THE preſent GOVERNMENT muſt be conſider'd as *newly ſettled*. The Family of the *Stewarts* was extinct in the Perſon of the late Queen after a Succeſſion of Five ſeveral Reigns. The Succeſſion to the Crown was ſettled by all the Eſtates of the Kingdom in the Illuſtrious Family of the Princeſs *Sophia*, the next Proteſtant Deſcendant and Relation of the former Royal Family. And tho' the *Act of Settlement* in the Reign of King *William*, was afterwards Recognized and Strengthened by ſeveral ſubſequent Acts in the Reign

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* Prov. xi 14. —xiv. 18.

Reign of Queen *Ann*; yet 'tis well known that under the Pretence of a ſtrict Hereditrary and Unalinable Right, a conſiderable Part of the Nation were Diſſatisfied with it, and notwithſtanding the Obligation of ſolemn Oaths, and Publick Prayers, and all their Reverence and Love to the Queen, grew more and more Uneaſy with it. This went ſo far in the latter Part of Her Reign, as to give General *Umbrage* and Suſpicion of a formed Deſign to Change the Settlement and introduce the *Pretender*, and that not only to the Honeſt and Well-affected Part of the Nation; but to the Houſe of HANOVER it ſelf, as appears by their excellent *Memorial* upon that Occaſion. The Meaſures concerted between Us and *France*; and the different Treatment at our Court of the the reſpective Friends and Miniſters of each; gave the boldeſt Aſſurance to all its Enemies, and the juſteſt Apprehenſions to all its Friends: So that by the ſudden Death of the late Queen, the *Act of Succeſſion* took Place in the midſt of a powerful Struggle to ſet it aſide, and to the great Surprize and Diſappointment of Many. The wiſe and ſteddy Conduct of his Preſent MAJESTY, ſince his Acceſſion to the Throne, has fixed a rooted Diſguſt and Hatred in the Minds of Many who ſeem'd to acquieſce upon his firſt Arrival; and hoped to recommend Themſelves to his Favour. So that at this Time the Preſent Government muſt be conſider'd as a Thing tender and newly ſettled; not arrived to that Strength and Stability, or grown to the full Proportion and firm Conſiſtence, which we have Reaſon to believe longer Time and greater Acquaintance, cannot fail to give it: When we come to find by our own Experience, the happy Effects of a great Capacity for Government, and ſteddy Views to the Publick Intereſt. Now in ſuch a Circumſtance

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of Things, 'tis more Needful then Ordinary, for a Government to ſtrengthen itſelf by the Acceſſion of all its Friends; and fix itſelf like a Tree newly planted by taking deeper Root, and ſpreading wider under Ground.

Besides; If it appears, which is a natural Conſequence of the Former, That the Government has Many *Enemies* too; it will be the more Reaſonable and Neceſſary ſtill. And here the Fact is too Open to be denyed or diſſembled: For beſides a great Body of *Non-jurors*, the more open and honeſt Enemies of the Preſent Government; and who reckon themſelves obliged, in Principles of Conſcience, to overturn it as ſoon as ever they are able; and which I am credibly informed are pretended to amounnt to 20000 Communicants in and about the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminiſter*: there are Multitudes up and down in City and Country, who partly thro' Ignorance and Miſtake; and partly thro' Prejudice and falſe Principles, artfully inſtilled and kept up in their Minds, remain Diſſatisfied and Uneaſy; or are only *Neuters*, who ſit ſtill in Prudence to avoid Inconvenience to themſelves, or the Odium and Suſpicion of thoſe about them, without any Hold in Conſcience or Affection. Some Places boaſt of Majority of Numbers, a General Diſſaffection, and being All of one Side. Count *Gyllenborg* tells Baron *Gortz*, * *In a Country where Nine in Ten are Rebels*: One may allow for great Abatements, and leave great Numbers behind. The viſible Elation and Satisfaction of Mind which appears in the Countenance of Many; and the great Licentiouſneſs of their Tongues, upon every Diſappointment of the publick Meaſures, or any Attempt upon our Peace;

* *Vid.* Letters, *&c.*

Peace;

a plain Evidence of an Unnatural Diſſaffections. While Many remain in leſſer Places of the Cuſtoms and Exciſe, *&c.* ſcattered up and down in all the Trading Parts of the Kingdom, who propagate and cheriſh the Uneaſineſs and Fear of the Common People; and at the ſame Time they eat the King's Bread, lift up their Heel againſt Him, and ſpurn the Hand which feeds and cloaths them: Several B—s, ſome in high Truſts, ſhall refuſe to ſign a modeſt Proteſtation againſt the moſt cauſeleſs and unnatural Rebellion in the Bowels of the Kingdom; but without any Scruple, drink the *Pretender*'s Health: While many of the Inferior-Clergy and Country-Gentry, in Poſts of Conſequence, and great Influence upon others, plainly appear Diſſatisfied or Indifferent: Yea, when ſo great a Body of Men, and of ſo wide an Influence, as the two Univerſities, after many Rebellious Tumults, and ſeveral Inſtances of the moſt provoking and ſtudy'd Inſolence, ſhall either refuſe to addreſs upon Suppreſſing the late Unnatural Rebellion, and expreſs the higheſt Reſentments againſt thoſe who moved it; or not do it but at a ſhameful and indecent Diſtance, and with great Difficulty and Oppoſition; tho' the Latter has made ſome Amends by their laſt *Addreſs*; it muſt needs amount to a formidable Number, and carry a threatning Danger: Like a mighty Wind to a tender Plant, which threatens the Breaking it down, or Tearing it up by the Roots.

Add to all this, the many powerful Enemies *Abroad*: The whole Popiſh Part of *Chriſtendom*, muſt be ſuppos'd *Inclined to the Pretender's* Intereſt by the common Principles of Government and Religion; eſpecially, the more Zealous and Bigotted among them: Beſides the peculiar Reaſons to ſeveral of them upon other Accounts; the Duke of *Savoy* has Pretenſions of his own, as next

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in Blood. One would be tempted to think, our nearer Neighbours are rather over-ruled by the preſent Neceſſity of their Affairs, and Regard to their own Intereſt, than led by Affection and Inclination; if we conſider their Conduct during the late Rebellion, or ſlow Compliance with the Terms of the New Alliance. Baron *Gortz* tells Count *Gyllemborg*, from *Paris*; *To imagine this Court at the Bottom of their Heart would not be better pleaſed to have the* Pretender *on the Throne of* England *the then Elector of* Hanover, *is to have wrong Notions of its Intereſt, and of the private Sentiments of the Duke Regent.* And again, *One of thoſe who has the Principal Direction aſſured me, That in this Affair we have nothing to apptehend from the Regent.* If the King of *Sweden*, a Raſh and entriprizing Prince, is capable of ſo Diſhonourable and Deſperate an Undertaking, by Countenancing the Rebels Abroad, and receiving Aſſiſtance from Thoſe at Home, to venture a Deſcent; it muſt needs raiſe a new Diſturbance, occaſion the Loſs of many Lives, and give a Shock to Buſineſs and Credit among Us. And certainly the reſtleſs Spirits of our Enemies and repeated Attempts upon our Settlement and Peace; freſh Enterprizes ſpringing out of former Diſappointments; may juſtly alarm a prudent Fear, and put Us into the beſt Condition for our Defence. Will any Wiſe Government ſuffer it ſelf to be diſabled of any of its Friends in a Circumſtance of apparent Danger, or doubtful Poſture of Affairs? It was certainly Politick, tho' highly Illegal in King *James* the II. when in his Speech to the Parliament upon *Monmouth*'s Defeat, He told them plainly; *Let no Man take Exception that there are ſome Officers in the Army, not qualified according to the* Teſt *for their Imployments; The Gentlemen, I muſt tell you, are moſt of them well known unto me; and having formerly ſerved me upon many Occaſions, and always approved the Loyalty of*

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their Principles by their Practices, I think them now fit to be employed under me: And will deal plainly with you, that after having the Benefit of their Service, in ſuch a Time of Need and Danger; I will neither expoſe them to Diſgrace, nor myſelf to the Want of them, if there ſhould be another Rebellion to make them Neceſſary to me. It was moved after a great Debate in the Houſe of Commons, *That the Catholicks who had been Uſeful, and well known to his Majeſty, might be named and compenſated*; and they tell the King in their Addreſs, *They were preparing Bills to indemnifie them from the Penalties they had incurred.* And can it be thought Unreaſonable that Proteſtant Subjects and Friends of the Government, ſhould be *legally* ſet at Liberty, and rendered capable of ſerving the Prince in ſo like a Circumſtance of Things, when They thought fit to ſhew them ſo much Favour who acted by a diſpenſing Power, and againſt the Laws directly provided for that Purpoſe? Would not theſe very Words, with only Regard to Conſent of Parliament, and Courſe of Law, become the Mouth of his Preſent MAJESTY, with exacteſt Truth, in all the the Branches of it, with Reſpect to the Proteſtant Diſſenters? I proceed to the

Second ASSERTION; That the Diſſenters are true *Friends* of the Preſent Government. This will appear with the greater Advantage if theſe two Things are conſider'd diſtinctly, *viz.* That they are a Conſiderable Body of People in the Kingdom; and, that they are hearty Friends and well-affected to this Government.

THAT they are a *Conſiderable Body* has been ſometimes induſtriouſly miſrepreſented, when it was neceſſary to ſerve a preſent Turn, *i. e.* To render them Deſpicable and Unworthy the Publick Favour: Tho' at other Times the Truth has extorted a ſpitefull Acknowledgement, *i. e.*

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When it was thought fit to awaken the Fear and Jealouſy of the Government, and cruſh and keep them under. But that, if they are conſidered together under the ſeveral Denominations by which they are diſtinguiſhed from one another, tho' all agreeing in their Principles of Civil Government, and Zeal for his Preſent Majeſty, as well as involved in common Difficulties; they will be found to make up a large and valuable Body of People, capable of conſiderable Service, and adding conſiderable Weight; is well known to ſome Gentlemen of Your Honourable Houſe, and will be made to appear in the moſt Authentick Manner, whenſoever it ſhall be made Neceſſary. They are Numerous and Conſiderable in all the great Cities and Towns in *England* and *Ireland*, as *London*, *Exeter*, *Briſtol*, *Norwich*, *Taunton*, *Bridgewater*, *Newcaſtle*, &c. And tho' the Nobility and Gentry have much deſerted Them, at leaſt, as to open Profeſſion and under their preſent Hardſhips; They are however a great Number of Men of Good Eſtates and Free-holds, in all the Counties of *England*; a Trading and Wealthy People; generally Sober and Induſtrious; Peaceable and Inoffenſive; who contribute conſiderably, and with the greateſt Cheerfulneſs to the Publick Taxes, and to all the Works of Charity in the Kingdom; a well compacted Body, with one common View, and of one Heart in the *Publick Intereſt*, under all the different Names, and Marks of Diſtinction among Themſelves.

If it be ſaid: The Church *alone* is ſufficient to Support the Government without the Help of the Diſſenters, and there Numbers make them only the more Dangerous. I Anſwer; the whole Strength of the Preſent Government lies in the Hands of the Moderate Church, and the Proteſtant Diſſenters: and 'tis plain by un-

deniably Experience, the Low-Church alone is not a ſufficient Ballance to all the *Papiſts*, *Non-jurors*, *High-Church* and Diſaffected, without the Diſſenters thrown into the Scale, and in ſome Caſes hardly with it. 'Tis demonſtrable Fact, The preſent Parliament had never been choſen without their Help, and Many can never be choſe again without it: In the City of *London* and ſeveral Principal Corporations of *England*, there are not Perſons enough of Circumſtance and Capacity ſufficient to fill the Places of greateſt Importance to the Government, who are well-affected, and zealous for its Intereſts, while the Proteſtant Diſſenters remain under legal Incapacity; as High-Sheriffs of Counties, Commiſſions of the Peace, Common Council of *London*, Mayors and Burgeſſes of Corporations, and Bayliffs of Townſhips, *&c.* And can it ſtand with true Policy to ſuffer the Adminiſtration, in ſo many principal Poſts, in the Hands of Enemies, or cold and faithleſs Friends, while a Body of Men of Unqueſtionable Fidelity and Diſtinguiſhed Zeal, are obliged to ſtand ſtill and be Unimployed? Would not this be a like Wiſdom with laying aſide an able and experienced General, after a long Courſe of ſignal Victories, with Marks of Diſgrace, upon the very Point of a deciſive Stroke to a long depending War; and ſetting up a Court Penſioner and a Traitor in his Room? Or diſcarding the old, honeſt, ſucceſsful Officers, and bringing Perſons of known Enmity or ſuſpected Friendſhip into their Place?

HOWEVER, if the well-affected Part of the Church were never ſo ſufficient to ſupport the GOVERNMENT, would ſo conſiderable a Body of People add no Strength, and contribute Nothing towards its Safety? Are they afraid of having it too ſecure? And can Gentlemen ever bring themſelves to believe, that a great Number of ſincere Friends can be either inſignificant to the publick Good,

Good, or capable of being dangerous to it? Is our Conſtitution ſo extremely peculiar, contrary to all the Reaſon of Things, and all the Experience in the World; to be ſafer and more ſecure, not by many, but by fewer Friends to it?

But this brings me to conſider them as a Body of People well-affected, and true *Friends* to the preſent Government. Their *Principles* are loyal upon the Foot of the Conſtitution, equal to the beſt Subjects of the Kingdom; for they are *ſubject not for Wrath, but for Conſcience Sake*; *i. e.* from a Senſe of Duty, and Regard to the Divine Appointment. And don't *reſiſt for Fear of Damnation*; *i. e.* any juſt and lawful Governors, who act according to the Obligation of their Oaths, and ſettled Laws of the Land; tho' not to arbitrary and lawleſs Tyranny, which is contrary to the Law of Nature, and out of the Apoſtle's Caſe. And after all the Clamour has been rais'd againſt them upon this Head, are able to challenge all the World of ever acting otherwiſe. Perhaps they are the only Body of Men in the Kingdom can boaſt of *proper Loyalty*, *i. e.* Standing by the Laws of the Land, and Intereſt of their Country; when all others, in their Turns have by Court Flatteries, and worldly Preferments, and treacherous Principles, been drawn at one Time or other into fatal Meaſures to betray it. They have no Principles inconſiſtent with the Engliſh Conſtitution and preſent Government, but a dear Affection to it, and higheſt Obligation to ſupport it. They ſtand clear of every falſe Hypotheſis, built upon wrong and precarious Principles; as that of a King *de Facto*, of Conqueſt, preſent Poſſeſſion, and mere Submiſſion: They ſtand firm upon the Foot of a Legal Settlement, and are chain'd to its Intereſt, by the ſtrongeſt Ties of Gratitude and Conſcience. So that in Reality, there are no Men

* Rom. xiii. 1.

Men in the Kingdom truer Friends to the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION and their Country's LIBERTY, either upon ſtronger Principles, or with a warmer Zeal.

AND if you look into their *Practice*, we ſhall find them always active Friends in its Service, under almoſt perpetual Frowns and Diſcouragement. I dare venture to aſſert with Confidence, and upon certain Knowledge, That no People in the Kingdom more heartily rejoyc'd at the paſſing the *Act of Settlement*; or ſtuck more firm and inviolable to it under the great Hazard into which it was brought. None more heartily concurred and fell in with it, upon its taking Place; or have been more concern'd for its Honour and Support. I ſhall not mention their peaceable and dutiful Behaviour, which is common to them with all other good Subjects; but only what is peculiar to themſelves: Beſides the ordinary and ſtated Seaſons of publick Prayer, in which they always expreſs'd a hearty Zeal, there were Hours of Prayer by joint Concert in private Families, and three times a Week in all their Congregations, in the Time of the late Diſorders and Rebellion. They were active to their Power, and beyond their Power, to ſupport its Intereſt. For they rais'd conſiderable Bodies of Men, and appear'd in Defence of the Government, even without Commiſſion, and againſt Law, in a Time of Extremity; as in the *North* of *Ireland*, where they are vaſtly the greater Part of the Proteſtant Inhabitants; and in *Newcaſtle*, and ſeveral Parts of *Lancaſhire*, &c. and were reduc'd to the ſingular Hardſhip of ſerving the Government againſt a publick Enemy to the Hazard of their Lives, with the Danger of being hang'd upon their Return; and of needing a Pardon from the Crown, for Helping to keep it upon His MAJESTY's Head. And now, I think, I may leave it to an impartial

partial Stranger, or even a generous Enemy, allowing only the Truth of this faithful Repreſentation, Whether it is good Policy to ſuffer ſo great a Body of zealous Friends to lie for ever under an Incapacity, and render'd uſeleſs to their Service; and whether it would be thought ſo in the Caſe of any other People in the Nation, or any other Society upon Earth.

I SPEAK not now of the *Equity* and Juſtice, as well as the Prudence and Policy of it; the Gratitude as well as Intereſt, which ought to lead to it, as they are deprived of their Natural Rights as Members of Society, and their Capacity of Serving it: Of the Unrighteouſneſs as well as Hardſhip, of laying a conſiderable Body of faithful Friends under legal Fetters, without any Crime, and by the Intereſt of popiſh Councils, or mortal Enemies of the Proteſtant Succeſſion; and notwithſtanding repeated Aſſurances of Temper and Friendſhip in every returning Diſtreſs, from Thoſe who pretend to be the Friends of it; as juſt before the *Revolution*, and at the latter End of the *Queen*'s Reign: I ſay, I would not pretend to argue this here, becauſe I would not allow my ſelf once to queſtion the Juſtice and Honour of thoſe Venerable Bodies, who are the *Wiſdom* of the NATION, and the *Guardians* of its Safety.

I KNOW the great Objection againſt all this will be, That 'twill give Umbrage to the Church; diſguſt and offend the Zealots and Bigotted; revive the Cry of the Church's Danger, and alarm the Pulpits. I anſwer, It will pleaſe the wiſe and hearty Friends of the GOVERNMENT, who have a real Attachment to its Intereſt, and Compaſs of Mind ſufficient to take it in. Muſt not they needs approve what ſo apparently tends to its Welfare? Certainly very Few, who are not either of ſuſpected Zeal, or narrow and partial Views, will not be pleas'd. I am ſure, 'tis eaſy to tell,

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who will be moſt *Diſpleas'd* with it, and are afraid any thing ſhould be done in their Favour. All the *Roman-Catholicks*, and *Non-jurors*, *High-Church* and Diſaffected in the Kingdom to a Man; who have declar'd Them lately to be Men of Principle, and of immoveable Fidelity to the preſent GOVERNMENT. And can the ſame Thing upon any Principles of ſound Reaſon, diſpleaſe the Friends and Enemies of the Government too? Is it capaple of ſerving at the ſame Time Intereſts ſo inconſiſtent, and irreconcileable to one another? And ſhall a Body of faithful Men be ſacrific'd to the Humour of weak and miſtaken Friends, or the Intereſts of open Enemies; and ſtand depriv'd of their Civil Rights for fear of offending thoſe who cannot be depended upon themſelves, and envy the GOVERNMENT their Help? Nor can this reaſonably make a ſingle Enemy to the Government, or render them capable of doing any the more, but a great deal the leſs Miſchief. But I ſhall conſider this under the next *Queſtion*.

Queſt. II. WHETHER ſetting the Proteſtant Diſſenters free from legal Incapacity of ſerving the preſent GOVERNMENT, is *Conſiſtent* with the *Safety* and Welfare of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*? This is the grand Pretence, and lies at the Bottom of Mens Uneaſineſs and Fear. While there is any Apprehenſion, tho' never ſo miſtaken, of Danger and Inconvenience to the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, ſome Men would rather hazard the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION and our Civil Liberty, tho' that is the ſureſt Way moſt effectually to deſtroy it. Now, Sir, with your leave, I ſhall undertake in the next Place to conſider what Aſpect and Influence it may be ſuppoſed to have upon the Church, and whether it has any Tendency to prejudice and weaken it. And I reckon we ſhall be able to make a Judgment of this Caſe, if we conſider the *Eſtabliſhed Church*,

Church, either 1. As to its outward *Polity*, as ſettled and ſecur'd by the Laws of the Land. Or, 2. As to its *ſpiritual* State, and ſettled by the Laws of the Goſpel. By what is peculiar to itſelf, and only accidental to it; or by what is eſſential to it as a Proteſtant Church, and common to that with all others. If it can be any Prejudice to it, it muſt be in one or other of theſe Reſpects.

Now, Sir, if we conſider the Church as to its outward *Polity*, and Legal Preferments, which is the more famous and generally received Sence of it, 'tis well-known the preſent Form of Church Government by Dioceſan Biſhops and their Spiritual Courts; the Worſhip by the preſent *Liturgy*, and outward Rites, as well as Temporal Honours and Preferments, the Revenues and publick Places of Worſhip; are all ſettled by the Laws of the Land, and ſecur'd by many Acts of Parliament. The ſeveral Poſts of Dignity and Honour, and all the Temporal Emoluments belonging to the *Biſhops* Sees, the *Deaneries*, *Prebendſhips* and *Parochial* Cures, are regulated and fix'd by the Laws of the Land, made Free-holds for Life, and many of them in the Gift of the Crown. And tho' a conſiderable Part of the Church and Abbey-Lands, which the Superſtition of many Ages, had laviſhly beſtow'd, to the manifeſt Danger and Inconvenience of the State, was taken away by the Crown at the REFORMATION; yet there remains a conſiderable Revenue in the *Cathedral* and *Parochial* Churches, perhaps equal to that of the Crown itſelf. And tho' an honourable Support of the Goſpel-Miniſtry is required by the Goſpel, and made the Duty of the Chriſtian-Church; yet the Temporal Honours to which they are advanced, and the liberal Proviſion made to ſupport them, is owing to the Favour of the Government and Laws of the Land. And the worſt I wiſh them is, That they may

be always in honeſt and worthy Hands; never made the Baits of Ambition, purſu'd by mean Compliance, or proſtituted to ſerve a ſecular Purpoſe.

Now, Sir, reſtoring a Legal Capacity to Proteſtant Diſſenters to ſerve the Government, could do no Injury, or any Way interfere with the *Eſtabliſhed Church* in this Conſideration of it: For the whole Polity and Government of the Church; all the external Rites and Advantages, would remain untouch'd, and ſtand juſt as they did. The Diſſenters make no Pretenſion to Church-Lands and Preferments, or to break in upon the Church's Incloſure. It would not deprave one Line of the Book of *Common-Prayer*, ſtand in the Way of any Man's Ambition, or render *Them* capable of the leaſt Preferment in the Church. They are not coveteous, or ambitious, or envious at others Greatneſs; but content with a meaner outward Circumſtance, and to be ſupported by the voluntary Contribution of thoſe to whom they miniſter. If the Diſſenters had all their Civil Rights, and ſet upon the Foot of their Fellow-Subjects in that Reſpect, they would be at a ſufficient Diſtance from Equality with the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, and kept in ſufficient Subordination to it: As much as the Temporal Advantages of the Church are greater than theirs; and Security by Act of Parliament is a better Tenour for Subſiſtence, than an Arbitrary and Precarious Allowance, proceeding only from the Good-will of their People, and their Sence of Duty to a Goſpel Miniſtry. Nor *can* any Change be made in the preſent Frame without the Concurrence of the whole Legiſlature by which 'tis ſettled and confirmed: And beſides the repeated Promiſe of his MAJESTY to Support it, who never breaks his Word to a private Subject, and is a Security equal to an Act of State; this would make no Alteration

tion in the Caſe: For not one Diſſenter could ſet in either Houſe of Convocation, nor one ſingle Member the more be capable of ſitting in either Houſe of Parliament. And which Way could it poſſibly affect the Temporalities of the Church or any Branch of its preſent Conſtitution? So that 'tis altogether Needleſs as well as Unreaſonable, to ſtrip the Diſſentes of their Civil Rights, for any needful Security or Advantage to the Church.

Or, If we conſider the *ſpiritual* State of the Church; what is eſſential to it as ſuch, and common to it with all other Proteſtant Churches, *i. e.* as Profeſſing the Chriſtian Faith, and maintaining the Chriſtian Worſhip, and the Practice of Chriſtian Duties: So 'tis diſtinguiſh'd from every falſe Religion, or what is corrupted by groſs Error and Idolatry. And this is the Sence of the Church in the Language of the Goſpel and in the Article of the *Church of England*: * *The Viſible Church of Chriſt is a Congregation of faithful Men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and Sacraments adminiſtred, according to Chriſt's Ordinance, in all thoſe Things which of Neceſſity are requiſite to the ſame.* In this Sence the Diſſenters readily own the *Church of England* not only to be a True Church, but a very Valuable and conſiderable Part of the Chriſtian Church; which has produced many Great and Excellent Perſons, not only Champions, but Martyrs for the Proteſtant Religion. They rejoice in the great Learning and Accompliſhments of ſeveral of her Miniſters; the Regular and Serious Piety of many of her Members; the Charitable and Generous Spirit of ſome among them; And have been all along from the Be-

* Art. xix.

gining of the REFORMATION ready to ſhew their Reſpect by *Occaſional Communion* with Her, and Joyning in Her Worſhip ſo far as they were ſatisfied; which was never thought either a Wickedneſs or Affront in any other Communion in the World. Tho' it muſt be owned they have not always met with Chriſtan or Civil Treatment upon that Account; and it has very much diſcouraged and cooled their Zeal this Way of late.

IF we conſider the *Eſtabliſhed Church* in this Sence, it can receive no Damage by the Diſſenters Civil Rights, or any Check to its Proſperity and Glory. Which Way can it poſſible tend to the leaſt Prejudice? For which Article would be affected by it, of all the Thirty Nine? Which Part of inſtituted Worſhip, tho' Epiſcopacy and Liturgy were taken into the Account? What Practice of Godlineſs, or Duty of Life? Would not the whole Frame of Chriſtian Doctrine and Worſhip remain Entire, and every Duty required by the Goſpel, be ſafe and ſecure in the Poſſeſſion of the Church, tho' ſuch who Diſſent from Her in External Rites, and Human Impoſitions, were ſet at Liberty, and made capable of ſerving the GOVERNMENT.

YEA, if Men would allow one cool and unprejudiced Moment, I doubt not but to make it appear, That it would be ſo far from any Prejudice, that it would exceedingly ſerve and promote its true Intereſt. Nothing would more effectually tend to heal our preſent Breaches, and allay Animoſities among good Men; to make them of *one Mind and one Heart*, under all their different Apprehenſions in leſſer Things. It would be the likelieſt Means to produce a Union of Affection, if not of Judgment, and promote brotherly Love and mutual Kindneſs among *Fellow-Proteſtants*, and *Fellow-Subjects*, where Enmity and Diſtance,

Diſtance, are ſo unnatural, and of ſo fatal Conſequence. The Liberty of Worſhipping GOD according to their Conſcience, and ſerving their Country in their ſeveral Capacities, they think the natural Right of every Man, who has never made any Forfeiture by avowing Principles or Practices inconſiſtent with the Publick Safety; and they can never think themſelves well us'd while they ſtand depriv'd of either. So that this would make them Eaſy and Uſeful to the Publick at the ſame Time, who are now *diſobliged* as well as diſabled by unreaſonable Reſtraints.

AND it would remove the Prejudice of *Others* againſt them. When Innocent Men are diſtinguiſhed by publick Marks of Infamy, as ſo many dangerous or ſuſpected Perſons, who are Unworthy or Unfit to be uſed; it naturally gives a Jealouſy and Diſtruſt of them, and raiſes an Odium and Ill-will. Men harbour ſecret Suſpicions of ſomething amiſs, ſtand at a diſtance from one another, and converſe always under a Guard. 'Tis owing to the ſevere Laws againſt them, and their unkind Treatment, they come to be ſo generally miſtaken, and mark'd out to Popular Rage; and we have ſeen in how many Inſtances they have felt the Effects of a cruel Anger and bitter Zeal. I may venture to ſay upon the Experience of all Ages, That Party Diſtinctions and Partial Regards will always keep alive Jealouſies and Feuds; but a more equal Treatment of faithful Subjects would remove unreaſonable Prejudice and Miſunderſtanding, lead Men into freer Converſe, breed a mutual Confidence and Affection to one another: Yea, it would promote a hearty Zeal in the great Things in which we are all agreed, and make Men joyn heartily in every Deſign for the publick Good. The whole Force of their Spirits would unite in the great Intereſts of unqueſti-

unqueſtionable Chriſtianity; and the great Emulation and Ambition would be, who ſhould be the moſt Uſeful and do the moſt Good. And let any one judge, Whether this is not the *natural Tendency* of Things; and ſuch a Temper the moſt Friendly to all the true Intereſts of Religion? Or, Whether 'tis ever like to thrive and proſper under mutal Uneaſineſs, Jealouſy, and Enmity to one another. And tho' it might poſſibly raiſe the preſent Reſentment and Clamour of the Angry and Ill-affected; I dare venture to Propheſy, It would ſoon cool and abate, among Honeſt Minds, by the ſenſible Experience of its good Effects; and among the Ill-minded, by utter Diſcouragement and Diſpair: That is, It would not fail producing laſting Effects of a real and ſubſtantial Good, with only the ſhadow and ſound of a preſent and imaginary Evil.

If any imagine, That this would drain the Publick Aſſemblies, or draw off any from their Communion; I ſhall only ſay, 'Tis a very diſhonourable and unworthy Imputation upon ſo great a Body who have ſo many peculiar Advantages of Law and Learning of their Side. Is not the Clergy of *England* ſufficiently furniſh'd and ſupported, to ſecure the Intereſts of the Church, againſt any Impreſſion from the Diſſenters? And *ought* not Men to be left at Liberty to choſe their own Religion, and the Way of Worſhip, which in their Judgments and Conſcience, they moſt approve? What if it quicken the Diligence and Zeal of both Sides, in promoting the Common Intereſts of Religion among us? I believe no good Man would envy the Clergy the Honour of Preaching and Living ſo well, as to out-ſhine the Diſſenters and draw from all their Congregations in the Kingdom.

It is ſometimes ask'd here, Do any wiſe Governments imploy thoſe who are not of the National Church? Don't they always keep the Civil Admi-

Adminiſtration within the compaſs of the Eſtabliſhment? If 'tis ſo reaſonable and fit, How come other Nations not to fall into the ſame Meaſures? I anſwer, If it appear, from what has been ſaid, to be highly Reaſonable and very Safe, it can be no Reaſon againſt it, tho' other States and Governments have not done ſo. We ought to be determined by the Reaſon of the Caſe, and not the mere Example of others; nor are we ſo in twenty other Inſtances as well as this. If they are Unreaſonable in any Thing, does it follow, That we muſt be ſo too? What if we are wiſer then they? Is it any diſhonour to be govern'd by more generous Sentiments, and larger Views? But this is ſo far from being true in *Fact*, that almoſt all wiſe Governments have conſtantly done ſo. That this was practiced among the *Jews*, *Egyptians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, yea the politer *Greeks* and *Romans*, has been diſtinctly conſidered *. And if we look into later Times and nearer Home; even in Popiſh Countries, while the Proteſtant Religion was ſuffered in *France*, there were Prime Miniſters of State among the Proteſtants; Generals of Armies and Mareſchals of *France*, as well as numerous Soldiers of Proteſtant Subjects. In *Germany* ſome of the greateſt Offices of the Empire are in the Hands of Proteſtant Princes; the King of *Pruſſia* is grand Chamberlain, and his preſent MAJESTY, grand Standard Bearer of the Empire.

IN all Proteſtant Countries, except our own, and excepting only the preſent Age, it was always ſo. In *Holland*, the *Arminians*, tho' a State Faction, are capable by the Law of the Country, of the higheſt Imployments, and are often in the greateſt Truſts. By the Laws of *Scotland*, there was no other *Teſt* ever requir'd, but Fidelity to the Government and the

† *Moderation a Vertue*, and the *Defence*. and the *Rights* of *Proteſtant Diſſenters*.

the *Oath of Allegiance.* This Would be ſo far from being peculiar to ourſelves, that we are almoſt the only Kingdom, to be ſure the only Proteſtant one, where there is any Body of Diſſenters from the publick Eſtabliſhment, who do not do ſo.

And may we not hope under the Reign of a Wiſe and Gracious SOVEREIGN, of large Views and general Kindneſs; under the Influence of a Brave *Prince*, who has ſurpriz'd the World with an unexceptionable Conduct, and exceeded the Expectations of his beſt Friends in the Adminiſtration of the Publick Affairs in a critical Juncture; and of an auſpicious *Princeſs*, the Glory of Her Sex, and the Wonder and Delight of ours; to find the ſame noble Spirit transfus'd into thoſe about them, purſu'd in all the Publick Councils, and ſpread among all their Subjects; that a narrow and ſelfiſh Mind will grow into Diſgrace, and generous Sentiments and diſintereſted Views, become the Faſhion; that all others will grow wiſe by the Impreſſion of ſo great Examples; and be happy under the Influence of their ſucceſſive Reigns.

YOU'LL forgive the Interruption to Publick Buſineſs in which you have ſo great a Share, and which Nothing but a Zeal for the Publick Good, has drawn out to ſo great a Length. If I ſhall be ſo happy to ſet the Matter in any Light, and give Satisfaction to the Impartial, it will reach the higheſt Ambition of One, who has the true Intereſt of his Native Country, and the Proteſtant Religon, moſt at Heart; and is proud of this Opportunity of ſubſcribing himſelf,

Sir,

Your moſt Reſpectful

And Devoted Servant